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Dairy 'mooves' into a new market

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A Queens dairy is hoping to attract consumers to a new type of milk - one that's been spun at 400 mph.

Elmhurst Dairy hopes its "UltraPure" milk will fill a gap between conventional milk and pricey organic milk, company officials say.

"Consumers have been drawn to it. It lasts longer, and consumers feel it tastes better," said Cyrus Schwartz, president of Elmhurst Dairy's subsidiary Mountainside Farms, who is a fifth generation milk-producer.

The key is a bacterial centrifuge, about as big as a dinner table, that spins the milk at 4,000 revolutions per minute during processing.

What the centrifuge removes is a sludgy material that includes cow cells and blood cells.

"It doesn't look so horrible, it's just concentrated matter we could pull out of milk that's not milk," Schwartz said.

What's left has 90 to 95% less bacteria - so the milk lasts longer, tastes better and is healthier, Schwartz said.

An unopened container of conventional milk has a shelf life of 8-10 days, while UltraPure milk offers a shelf life of 16-17 days, Mountainside Farms says.

Like organic milk, UltraPure is produced by cows without growth hormones or antibiotics, Schwartz said. But the milk isn't considered organic because Mountainside Farms doesn't require its farmers to feed their cows organically grown grain.

Such grain is the most expensive component in producing organic milk. By skipping it, Mountainside Farms is able to sell UltraPure for \$2.49 a half gallon. Organic milk typically sells for about \$4 a half gallon.

Milk purified with a bacterial centrifuge has been available in Canada, but this is the first time it's been sold in the U.S., Schwartz said.

It's now available in 150 grocery stores around the city, including Gristede's, Food Emporium, A&P, Foodtown, D'Agostino and Associated Supermarkets. There are the customary fat-free, 1% lowfat, 2% reduced fat and whole milk varieties.

Mountainside has been producing 8,000 half-gallons a week since August. "If our initial results are an indication of what the possibilities are, it could be 80,000 units a week," Schwartz said.

Now located in Jamaica, Elmhurst Dairy was founded in the early 1920s by Schwartz's grandfather and great-uncle in Elmhurst, Queens. The city's largest milk producer, it supplies milk to about 95% of New York's public schools and employs 700 workers.



BY

Turnbull for NEWS

Mountainside Farms prez Cyrus Schwartz displays UltraPure products.